Muzquizopteryx

Muzquizopteryx is a <u>genus</u> of <u>pterodactyloid</u> <u>pterosaur</u> (flying <u>reptile</u>) from the Late Cretaceous of what is now Coahuila, Mexico.

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Description

Muzquizopteryx was relatively small for a pterodactyloid pterosaur, with a wingspan of around 2 metres (6 ft 7 in). It had an elongated head with a convex upper profile, ending at the back of the head in a backward pointing short rounded crest. The jaws were toothless. The arms were very robust with the <u>humerus</u> featuring a large hatchet-shaped deltopectoral crest, indicating a strong wing musculature. The <u>pteroid</u> bone was long and pointed towards the neck, supporting a flight membrane.^[1]

Discovery and naming

In the 1990s, José Martínez Vásquez, a worker at the chalk quarry of $\underline{\mathrm{El}}$ Rosario, uncovered a skeleton of a pterosaur. This he handed to a quarry official, who had it bricked in on the face of an office wall as a decorative piece. After its unique scientific value had been recognised in 2002, the

Muzquizopteryx Temporal range: Late Cretaceous, 85.8 Ma Pre€ € OS D C P T J K PgN Scientific classification Kingdom: Animalia Phylum: Chordata Order: †Pterosauria Suborder: †Pterodactyloidea Clade: †Pteranodontia Family: †Nyctosauridae Genus: †Muzquizopteryx Frey et al., 2006 Type species †Muzquizopteryx coahuilensis Frey et al., 2006

specimen was acquired by the <u>Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México</u>. Subsequently, it was studied by a combined team of the University of Karlsruhe and the Desert Museum and scientifically reported in 2004.^[2]

In 2006 the <u>type species</u> <u>Muzquizopteryx coahuilensis</u> was named and described by <u>Eberhard Frey</u>, <u>Marie-Céline</u> <u>Buchy</u>, <u>Wolfgang Stinnesbeck</u>, <u>Arturo González-González</u> and <u>Alfredo di Stefano</u>. The generic name is derived from the <u>Múzquiz</u> district and a Greek πτέρυξ, <u>pteryx</u>, "wing". The <u>specific name</u> is derived from the state of Coahuila.

Muzquizopteryx is based on <u>holotype</u> **UNAM IGM 8621**, found in the El Rosario layers, early <u>Coniacian</u>-aged rocks.^[3] It consists of a nearly complete, articulated skeleton that includes soft tissue remains, among them long fossilised tendons along both sides of both lower arms. The specimen represents an adult individual.^[1]

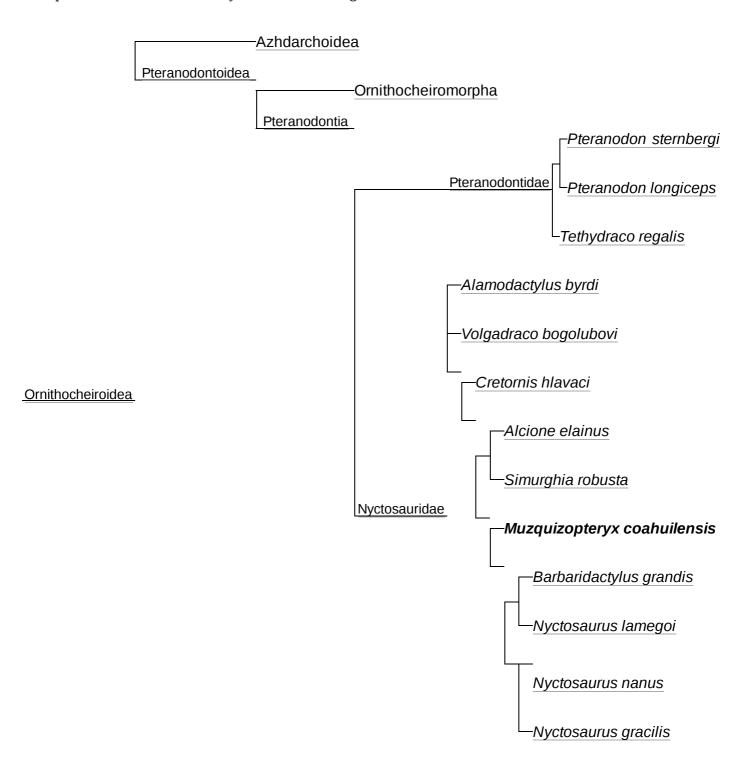
In 2012 a second specimen was reported, MUDE CPC-494, again uncovered by a quarry worker, perhaps at the same site, and sold to a private collector. It was later acquired by the <u>Museo del Desierto Saltillo</u>. It consists of the right upper wing of a subadult individual, with about 81% of the length of the holotype. As its provenance probably

consists of slightly older layers from the late $\underline{\text{Turonian}}$ and the remains are limited, it was referred to a Muzquizopteryx sp.^[4]

Classification

Muzquizopteryx was by its describers assigned to the <u>Nyctosauridae</u>. It would then be the oldest known member of the group and the smallest known; indeed the smallest adult Late Cretaceous pterosaur discovered until 2006.^[1] As *Nyctosaurus* is sometimes included with the <u>Pteranodontidae</u>, *Muzquizopteryx* too might be considered a member of that group under some classifications.

Below is a <u>cladogram</u> showing the results of a <u>phylogenetic</u> analysis first presented by Andres and Myers in 2014, and updated with additional data by Andres and colleagues in 2018.^[5]



References

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See also

- List of pterosaur genera
- Timeline of pterosaur research

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